

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 96-070-C - ORDER NO. 96-401  
JUNE 10, 1996

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IN RE: Petition of South Carolina Public Communi-	)	ORDER
cations Association for Revision to and	)	APPROVING
Clarification of Guidelines for the	)	PETITION
Connection of Privately-Owned Coin and/or	)	
Coinless Pay Telephones.	)	

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the Petition of the South Carolina Public Communications Association (SCPCA) seeking revision and clarification of the Commission's guidelines applicable to privately owned coin and/or coinless pay telephones. SCPCA seeks revision regarding the authorized charge for local coin calling and clarification concerning the charges for non-local directory assistance service.

The Commission's Executive Director instructed SCPCA to publish, one time, a prepared Notice of Filing in newspapers of general circulation in the affected areas. The purpose of the Notice of Filing was to inform interested parties of SCPCA's Application and of the manner and time in which to file the appropriate pleadings for participation in the proceeding. SCPCA complied with this instruction and provided the Commission with proof of publication of the Notice of Filing. Petitions to Intervene were filed by BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.

(BellSouth), and the South Carolina Telephone Coalition (SCTC or the Coalition).

A hearing was commenced on May 30, 1996, at 10:30 a.m. in the Commission's Hearing Room, with the Honorable Rudolph Mitchell, Chairman, presiding. SCPCA was represented by John F. Beach, Esquire. Beach presented the testimony of Clifton Craig. BellSouth was represented by William F. Austin, Esquire and Patrick Turner, Esquire. The SCTC was represented by M. John Bowen, Jr., Esquire and Margaret M. Fox, Esquire. Neither BellSouth, nor SCTC presented any witnesses. The Commission Staff (the Staff) was represented by F. David Butler, General Counsel. The Staff did not present a witness in the proceeding.

SCPCA presented the testimony of Clifton Craig. Craig stated that the local rate that should be charged an independent payphone provider (IPP) should tie back to the BellSouth rate. Craig stated that this would help to alleviate confusion among customers and end-users, and would allow the various independent payphone providers to place more telephones in the community. Craig noted on cross-examination that the BellSouth rate referred to was 25¢ per four minute increment. Craig also stated that with regard to non-local directory assistance charges, this was an accidental omission from the Customer Owned Coin Operated Telephone (COCOT) guidelines, that the independent payphone providers want to pass through to users non-local directory assistance charges, and to have such charge mirror those authorized for AT&T.

At the beginning of the hearing, counsel for the SCTC, John

Bowen, noted that SCTC did not oppose the SCPCA's charging of the BellSouth rate, even though a number of SCTC's payphones still charge 10¢. Further, Bowen stated SCTC's belief that the local companies could charge the AT&T rate anyway for non-local directory assistance, and that it agreed with the SCPCA's interpretation of the COCOT guidelines already. Therefore, SCTC did not oppose SCPCA's Petition in this matter. Accordingly, SCTC did not present the testimony of its witness, L. B. Spearman, as it had planned to do.

We have examined the requests of SCPCA, and agree that they should be granted, and that various COCOT guidelines should be modified accordingly. First, we hold that COCOT guideline No. 8 should be modified as requested by SCPCA. This modification would allow the COCOT provider to charge a rate for local coin calls not to exceed the charge authorized for coin payphone service provided by BellSouth. However, even so, we hold that the existing 10¢ low-income areas, public streets, and other specifically designated 10¢ areas shall remain at 10¢.

Second, we believe that COCOT guideline No. 2 should be modified as requested by SCPCA. This modification would allow the COCOT provider to charge for non-local directory assistance in an amount not to exceed the charged approved for AT&T on an intrastate basis. We believe that both of these changes will eliminate consumer confusion, and that, especially in the case of the first, would allow for more telephones to be placed by the independent payphone providers in locations that do not have a

payphone at present.

We also hold that the local exchange carriers (LECs) may charge COCOT providers an amount not to exceed the charge approved for AT&T for intrastate non-local directory assistance, rather than the LECs specific charge approved by this Commission. This would allow the LECs to recover costs for directory assistance service from the IPPs in conformity with the higher charge herein approved for the IPPs for non-local directory assistance.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

(SEAL)